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## **Levin joins First 5 California as new chief deputy director**

First 5 California welcomed former State Commissioner Diane Levin as its new Chief Deputy Director October 1. She comes to us from the Office of the Secretary of Education (OSE) where she served as Policy Director after being appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Levin served as the Secretary of Education's representative on the First 5 California Commission.



*Chief Deputy Director Diane Levin*

During her tenure at OSE, her work included leading and coordinating the development of the Governor's education policy agenda along with obtaining information and feedback from education stakeholders to help shape those policies.

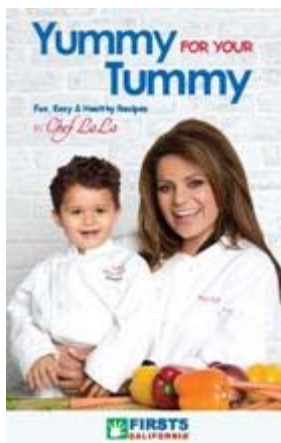
Prior to her OSE appointment, Levin worked as the Administrator of the No Child Left Behind Implementation Office in the California Department of Education. She also worked in the Superintendent's Executive Office during both the Jack O'Connell and Delain Eastin administrations, served as a language arts curriculum consultant, and was one of the authors of the 1999 *Reading-Language Arts Framework*.

Levin also served on the Advisory Committee on Before and After School Programs, the California Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs, the California Reading

Association and the California Writing Project. She is a credentialed teacher and completed her graduate work in the area of Reading instruction.

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### ***Yummy for Your Tummy is now available!***



First 5 California is pleased to announce that its free mini cookbook, *Yummy for Your Tummy*, is currently available! This bilingual booklet features easy, inexpensive and healthy recipes developed by nutritionist and popular TV personality, Chef LaLa. It also includes important nutrition information and tips, such as how to determine

healthy portion sizes for kids.

You can download a free copy of *Yummy for Your Tummy* at [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com), or by calling (800) KIDS-025. Copies also can be picked up later this month at Albertsons grocery stores in Southern California.

County commissions also will receive free copies of *Yummy for Your Tummy* by mid-November. We'll continue to keep you updated about our outreach activities in the weeks and months ahead.

As part of its media rollout strategy for *Yummy for Your Tummy*, First 5 California commissioned a study by Kelton Research on healthy eating. Interviews with more than 100 preschoolers in Fresno, Los Angeles and Sacramento counties revealed that contrary to conventional wisdom, kids not only like to eat fruits and vegetables, they frequently prefer them to candy.

These findings suggest kids will eat healthy foods if parents and caregivers make them easily available. With *Yummy for Your Tummy*, parents have an informative and handy resource right at their fingertips.

Check out First 5 California's YouTube video highlighting some of our favorite on-camera moments at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4DrZ91syc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4DrZ91syc).

You can also view a photo slideshow on First 5 California's Facebook page at

[www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-CA/First-5-California/34862144296?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-CA/First-5-California/34862144296?ref=ts).

A variety of TV, radio, print and online outlets in English, Spanish and Asian languages have already reported this story. Check out Executive Director Kris Perry's appearance – and cooking demo! – on *KCRA-3*, the *NBC* affiliate station in Sacramento at

[www.kcra.com/video/17850627/index.html](http://www.kcra.com/video/17850627/index.html).

Other media highlights include coverage by public radio stations *KQED* in Northern California, *KPCC* in Southern California and *KZYY* in Mendocino County; *CBS 2* in Los Angeles; *Univision* stations in Sacramento and Santa Barbara; and the *Vallejo Times-Herald*. More coverage is anticipated in the coming weeks!

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### **Indigenous populations focus of learning exchange**

Nearly 30 county and state commission representatives attended a two-day conference in Salinas to address the unique needs of a growing population of indigenous communities in California.

First 5 Monterey and the First 5 Association of County Commissions hosted the Indigenous Communities Learning Exchange October 2 and 3. The group heard from experts who work to improve the living and working conditions of these communities.

The workshop included lecturers from California State University, San Marcos and UC Santa Cruz as well as presentations by representatives of the Mixtec, Zaptoc and Triqui nations whose members

often speak neither Spanish nor English.

“It is important to have these types of workshops and meetings to help us better understand the richness of the history, culture and customs of an underserved population,” said First 5 Monterey Executive Director Francine Rodd. “Our goals are to increase the awareness and ability of First 5 commissions to support indigenous populations in California and to learn from each other’s experiences, successes and challenges.”

Indigenous immigrants reside in Fresno, Madera, Livingston, Kermit, Caruthers, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Hollister, Santa Rosa, Greenfield, Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Clara.

Silvia Flores, Geanne Lyons and Elisa Bupara from First 5 California attended the workshop. Casey Castillo, executive director of First 5 San Benito, also participated. It is estimated that 600-700 Triquis reside in San Benito County.

“Going deeper into our studies of the culture of one specific group will help us better understand how we might modify and evaluate our two funded programs serving the Oaxacan population in San Benito County,” Castillo said. “In these programs, Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueno and an informal organization of Oaxacan individuals work in partnership to help indigenous parents of children 0 to 5 years of age access health and social services and prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to learn.”

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### **Special Needs symposium**

The First 5 California Special Needs Project Symposium “From Research to Implementation & Sustainability” in San Diego October 28 drew nearly 130 attendees. Drs. Dean Fixen and Karen Blase from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill presented innovative ideas and led discussions on sustaining these important programs in the years ahead.

Special Needs Project counties sent teams to San

Diego to participate in the symposium, and other county commissions were represented by executive directors, program managers and local practitioners. Fixen and Blase will return to California in spring 2009 to conduct a follow-up symposium.

County teams worked together to apply the framework to local issues and topical areas such as early care and education and mental health. Fixen and Blase tailored their presentation to the work and strategic planning of First 5 state and county staff, with Dr. Blase exclaiming, "This is worthy work." Dr. Fixen added that California has "an opportunity to be a national and international leader in these efforts...for School Readiness."

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### **First 5 Sacramento Children's Celebration**

It was fabulous fun at the First 5 Sacramento Annual Children's Celebration at Fairytale Town in Sacramento's William Land Park October 11.

This year's event broke record numbers with 6,200 families in attendance and more than 800 free dental exams given to children at Tooth Fairy Lane.

First 5 Sacramento Executive Director Lin Batten said, "The Children's Celebration gives us an opportunity to provide a fun setting for the entire family to enjoy, and parents can receive information on programs that will benefit their children for years to come."

First 5 California's Carmen Padilla attended and was pleasantly surprised at the turnout of families and children. "What a wonderful opportunity for families to receive information and valuable resources," Padilla said. "It was great. Everybody had a good time."

The educational event was free for young children and their families when accompanied by a child 0 to 5. Families received a variety of resources,

including the *Kit for New Parents*, library cards from the mobile book van, photo ID kits, hearing screenings, appointments for children's health insurance enrollment and literacy book bags.

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### **UCLA study finds low-income kids suffer most**

A new study sponsored by First 5 California and released by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research found that preschool enrollment has increased while the number of overweight children in California has experienced a slight decrease.

Unfortunately, the overall health of California's kids, especially those from low-income families, has not improved. The study shows the proportion of children ages 0 to 5 without health insurance for all or part of the previous year remained unchanged from 2001 to 2005.

The study also found that two-thirds of children without health insurance are from low-income families, and that the number of children enrolled in private health care is falling – while reliance on public programs is rising.

To view the entire research brief, visit [www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu](http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu).

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### **First 5 California hits gospel airwaves**

Throughout late October and early November, gospel stations KTYM 1190 AM and KDYA 1460 AM are partnering with First 5 California by giving away the *Kit for New Parents* and airing a series of parenting tips on issues affecting African American children. The partnership began in late October.

Both radio stations also invited State Commissioner Carla Dartis to be their on-air guest. KTYM, which covers the area from Los Angeles to the Inland Empire, featured Dartis on its "Conversations with the Community" show, which is re-airing throughout a two-week period that began Oct. 27.

Commissioner Dartis also appeared as a guest during a live interview on KDYA's *The Marshalen Martin Show* October 25. In broadcasts airing through the first week of November, KDYA listeners from the Bay Area to Sacramento will hear Commissioner Dartis provide important information about First 5 California's programs and services.

Dartis described the radio interviews as "different, but eye-opening" experiences. "I found it so critically important that we, as commissioners, have to be engaged in getting the message about the First 5 California mission and our resources out to the public," she said. "It's been extremely exciting and rewarding to move our work forward."

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### **Early learning experts highlight new laws to improve preschool quality**

First 5 California Executive Director Kris Perry joined State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell and other leading early education advocates at a Sacramento preschool last month to celebrate the passage of two new laws that will improve quality preschool services in California.



*Executive Director Kris Perry chats with Senator Darrell Steinberg*

As we reported in the October County Connection, AB 2759

helps reduce administrative costs and allows more funding to go directly to preschool classrooms.

SB 1629 establishes a committee that will recommend ways to create a statewide Early Learning Quality Improvement System.

"One of First 5 California's top priorities is making quality preschool available to all 4-year-olds,"



Perry said. "We are pleased to assist with the implementation of these bills, which will help so many California children start kindergarten with the tools they need to succeed."

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### **Hands-on Health van attends star-studded women's conference**

Phase VI of First 5 California's Hands-on Health Mobile Outreach tour ended with a bang! First 5 California partnered with First 5 LA at The California Women's Conference in Long Beach on October 21 and 22. Excellent placement within the exhibit hall allowed the van's "edutainers" to reach an audience of approximately 1,000 women of all ethnic backgrounds at this star-studded event. California First Lady Maria Shriver stopped by the booth to express her gratitude for First 5 California's presence and participation in her event, and *Project Runway*'s Heidi Klum also was spotted visiting the van's exhibits.



*Hands-on Health van "edutainer"  
Yosel Lopez talks with a visitor.*

Other featured speakers at the conference included: Madeline Albright, Sally Field, Billie Jean King, Condoleezza Rice and Gloria Steinem.

First 5 California Executive Director Kris Perry attended the conference and described it as "truly inspiring and empowering in so many ways."

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### **New staff join First 5 team**

The First 5 California Research and Evaluation Division added another resource to its team with the hiring of Gayle Pitt as a Research Program Specialist II. Gayle holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and is completing her Master



of Arts degree in Public Policy Administration.

Pitt most recently worked at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security as a Staff Services Manager I, where she was responsible for the oversight of state and federal grant programs. Gayle has a history of initiating new programs and developing their supporting policies and procedures, skills which will prove invaluable as the Research and Evaluation Division launches the Center for Results.

The Communications Division soon will have two new Information Officers on board. Simeon Gant joins the Communications team November 10 and Vernetia Syphax begins December 1.

Gant comes to First 5 California with a wealth of experience, including working in the state legislative offices of Assemblywoman Karen Bass and state senators Don Perata and Carole Migden. He also has served as a legislative advocate for the NAACP and worked as a television producer and writer.

Syphax, who currently works with the California DMV forms unit, brings a strong background in graphic arts to First 5 California. She spent more than nine years working primarily as a graphic designer for California's student loan guarantee organization, EDFUND, followed by a short stint at the California Student Aid Commission as an outreach coordinator, writer and graphic artist.

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### **New survey reveals trends in California's child health care system**

Findings in a newly-released research brief sponsored by First 5 California and conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research indicates child health care in California is on a downhill slide.

The brief examines health trends among California children from a wide range of ethnicities and economic backgrounds. It is based upon an analysis of data collected through the California

Health Interview Survey (CHIS) – the nation's largest state health survey – in 2001, 2003 and 2005.

Key findings in the study include the following sobering statistics:

- Two-thirds of children without health insurance are from low-income families.
- Low-income children use community clinics for primary care at three times the rate of higher income children.
- The proportion of children enrolled in private health insurance is shrinking, while the reliance on public programs is growing.

“The research suggests there has been a steady erosion of health care and health access for the most vulnerable children,” said David Grant, lead author of the policy research brief and director of the CHIS. “As Californians, we have a lot of work to do to reverse the trend.”

The brief is available at  
[www.cfc.ca.gov/press/pub.asp](http://www.cfc.ca.gov/press/pub.asp).

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